

RED (BEET) VELVET CUPCAKES

It sounds bizarre, but trust us, this is a fabulous take on Red Velvet — a moist, fine crumbed cake that keeps in the fridge for days. Best of all, they are easy to make! If refrigerating, bring to room temperature before serving.

YIELD: 12 Bennington Potters muffin pan cupcakes

PREPARE: Preheat the oven to 375°; line muffin cups with cupcake papers

½ cups vegetable oil (we like light olive oil)

2 cups light brown sugar

2 cups pureed boiled or steamed red beets.

(About 3 medium-large beets, reserve some of the cooking liquid for frosting coloring)

½ cup melted semi-sweet chocolate chips, melted (try 1-1/2 minutes in a microwave to melt them)

½ tsp good vanilla extract

2 cups all-purpose flour (we like King Arthur)

2 tsp baking powder (we like Calumet because it is aluminum free)

½ tsp salt

1 egg

- 1 Cream together the oil and brown sugar until it starts to increase in volume and lighten in color. Beat egg in a separate bowl, discard 1 tb. of egg and add remaining egg to sugar and butter. Blend, then beets, melted chocolate and vanilla.
- 2 In a separate bowl, sift flour, baking powder and salt together. Add to the beet mixture, stirring until just combined and smooth.
- 3 Pour into the muffin cups and bake for 20-25 minutes (we always check them at 20 minutes), until a toothpick inserted into the center of a cupcake comes out clean. Cool before frosting.



At our house we like Red Velvet with Swiss Meringue Butter Cream, which is what we used for our photo. We like it because it is so stable and will withstand extreme heat. However, most people prefer cream cheese frosting, recipe at right.

PINK CREAM CHEESE FROSTING

- 2 8-ounce packages of chilled cream cheese
- 2 cups sifted powdered sugar
- 4 tablespoons unsalted butter at room temperature
- 1 tablespoon of reserved beet juice left over from boiling the beets
- ½ tsp. vanilla

- 1 Using a paddle beater for your mixer if you have one, beat the cream cheese until there are no lumps, then butter and beat until combined.
- 2 Add powdered sugar a tablespoon or two at a time with the mixer running. Beating in sugar is a messy business, so adding a little at a time keeps the sugar from whooshing out of the bowl. Alternatively, mix the sugar in larger additions by hand. When all of the sugar is incorporated, add vanilla and beet juice. If the frosting isn't firm enough add more sifted powdered sugar until it reaches a spreadable consistency.*
- 3 We like using a pastry bag and tip holder but without the tip, to get the look pictured here. Garnish with raspberries and mint leaves, or try dipping fresh cherries with stems attached in melted chocolate. Cool and then garnish